CHURCH HILL MIDDLE & ABBEYWOOD FIRST SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY (INCLUDING CYBER BULLYING)

Recommended by: ZGi

Recommendation Date: 13.06.24

Ratified by: LAGB

Signed:

Position on the Board: Chair

Ratification Date: 26.06.24

Next Review: 01.06.27

Policy Tier (Central/Hub/School):   School CH & AW

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Statement of Intent

At Central Region Schools Trust we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying, racism and homophobic or biphobic issues of any kind will not be tolerated in our school. We are a reporting school. This means that anyone who knows of any incident or anything happening is expected to report and tell school staff. All children have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment. All pupils must be aware of the distress these incidents can cause and not be mere bystanders.

Abbeywood First and Church Hill Middle Schools recognises the importance and value in dealing with the issue of bullying, racist, sexual and homophobic or biphobic incidents. The school expects all members of its community to be aware of any incidents and know what action to be taken. There is no justification whatsoever for this behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Bullying, racist, sexual and homophobic or biphobic incidents or behaviour is an issue for both bully and the victim. Both parties will be dealt with in positive and constructive ways which provides opportunities for change and development for the bully and victim alike.

The schools recognise and value the home / school partnership in dealing with these incidents. Effective management of these incidents is a shared responsibility involving all adults who work in school, alongside pupils and parents.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011

This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

Definition

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

Bullying is generally characterised by:
- **Repetition**: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent**: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting**: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance**: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

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Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:
- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who are looked after, or previously looked after.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.

Types of bullying
Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything.
Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:
- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Sexual
- Online (Cyber)
- Indirect (exploitation)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.
Homophobic/biphobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.
Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.
Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.
Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Prevention
Keeping all pupils safe is a clear priority for our schools and this commitment is shared with the whole school community at regular points throughout the academic year. In addition, the issue of bullying and the issues potentially associated with it will be raised with pupils at a number of levels:

At a whole school level – through assemblies, themed weeks, school council, Governors and parent engagement etc.

At classroom level – through curriculum learning, particularly in PSHE and form time, but throughout the extended curriculum

At an individual level – pupils who are victims of bullying, racist, sexual and homophobic or biphobic incidents will be offered additional support and guidance. Pupils who have instigated bullying against others will be

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supported with strategies to enable them to bring their unacceptable behaviour under control and prevent further incidents.

The schools recognise that there are particular times when pupils may be more vulnerable to these incidents– lunch and break times, beginning and end of the school day and on the way to and from school. Staffing arrangements will be put in place at such times to ensure that support is in place and to reduce the risk of bullying occurring.

Pupils will be positively encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying, racist, sexual and homophobic or biphobic incidents.

Parents who believe their children are the victims of bullying should report their concerns to school at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with school to keep their children safe in the future.

Similarly, if parents believe that their children are showing signs of bullying behaviours towards others, this information should be shared with school so that steps can be taken to address this problem and to prevent further incidents occurring.

Procotol for dealing with an incident of bullying
The schools follow a set procedure in an attempt to address any suspected or reported incidents of bullying. Staff will challenge unpleasantness between pupils at all levels and treat allegations of bullying seriously.
In all such cases the school reacts firmly and promptly in accordance with the following guidelines: -
1. Any pupil who has knowledge of an incident of bullying whether directed personally or towards others should enlist and receive the support of a trusted adult.
2. Where possible, information will be confidential.
3. All adults working in school should be vigilant both in class and around the school. Any pupil who feels threatened for any reason should be listened to, taken seriously and given appropriate support.
4. Cases should be directed for prompt attention in the usual route: - Class teacher → Phase Leader → Senior Leadership team.
5. Incidents are recorded on behaviour logs via Arbor and staff members should alert the appropriate Phase Leader and Head of School/ Principal.
6. An early enquiry should be instigated with evidence from witnesses and victim(s) as appropriate and parents notified as soon as possible, that an incident occurred in school.
7. Where there is proof or strong suspicion, parents of both parties should be involved at an early stage.
8. Assistance of Support Services (e.g Educational Psychologist) could be enlisted at an appropriate stage in order to help counsel the victim in appropriate ways of counteracting incidents of bullying, and where necessary advise on strategies to modify behaviour of the instigator.
9. The police will be involved where necessary.
10. Sanctions should be applied in cases where bullying is proven. These may include:
    - Detentions
    - Education of the bully regarding issues such as racism, sexism and homophobia
    - Engagement with the instigator to reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable
    - Restorative work
    - On report to class or form teacher, Phase leader or SLT
    - Signing of a contract
    - Removal from class, group or set
    - Internal refocus time
    - Exclusion from school at specific times e.g. lunchtime

- Fixed Term suspension from school
- Permanent Exclusion from school

Post Incident Response for Victims of Bullying

We intend to offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to the victims of bullying; the support provided in each case will be assessed on an individual basis. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the pupil's individual needs and may include: -

- Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do
- Sympathy and empathy
- Strategies to stop future incidents
- Counselling
- Befriending
- Assertiveness training
- Extra supervision and monitoring
- Creation of a Support Group
- Peer mediation / mentoring
- Informing and involving parents
- Arrangements to review progress
- Parents contacted daily or weekly to update on progress

CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Preventing and addressing cyber-bullying

To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

The school will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be. In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the school will follow the processes set out in the school behaviour policy.

Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among pupils, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained. The DSL will consider whether the incident should be reported to the police if it involves illegal material and will work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

Examining electronic devices

School staff have the specific power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (which has been increased by the Education Act 2011) to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices, including mobile phones, iPads and other tablet devices, where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

When deciding whether there is a good reason to examine or erase data or files on an electronic device, staff must reasonably suspect that the data or file in question has been, or could be, used to:
• cause harm, and/or
• disrupt teaching, and/or

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• break any of the school rules

If inappropriate material is found on the device, it is up to the staff member in conjunction with the DSL or other member of the senior leadership team to decide whether they should:

• retain it as evidence (of a criminal offence or a breach of school discipline), and/or

• report it to the police.

Any searching of pupils will be carried out in line with the DfE's latest guidance on screening, searching and confiscation. Any complaints about searching for or deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices will be dealt with through the school complaints procedure.

Bullying outside school premises

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

Safeguarding

If there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, a bullying should be addressed as a safeguarding concern under the Children's Act 1989. Where this is the case, staff should discuss the bullying concerns with the DSL and report concerns as per school policy.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Any incidents of bullying should be recorded on the school Arbor system in a consistent way that allows for the ongoing monitoring of behaviour. The Heads of School / Principal will monitor behaviour logs and analyse these on a half termly basis and more frequently if necessary, for individual pupils.

By such means we aim to create a friendly, open and caring environment where each individual appreciates his or her positive part in the school and wider community.

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